



Scrutinies! Examining our lives.

The primary way that the Church assists the catechumens (called the elect after the celebration of the Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent) in this conversion process during Lent is through the celebration of the rites called Scrutinies.

These ritual celebrations on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent are communal prayers celebrated around the elect to strengthen them to overcome the power of sin in their lives and to grow in virtue.

To scrutinize something means to examine it closely. The community does not scrutinize the catechumens, the catechumens scrutinize their own lives and allow God to scrutinize them and to heal them.

Every Catholic should spend some time reflecting on what obstacles to gospel living exist in his or her own life. Then when the Scrutinies are celebrated, we will all know that the prayers are for us as well as for the elect.

Taking seriously this dynamic of scrutiny and conversion gives us a richer perspective of Lenten "giving up".

What we are to give up more than anything else is sin, which is to say we are to give up whatever keeps us from living out our baptismal promises fully.

Along with the elect we all need to approach the season of Lent asking ourselves what needs to change in our lives if we are to live the gospel values that Jesus taught us.

Our journey through these forty days should be a movement even closer to Christ and to the way of life he has exemplified for us.